

Location

Located in the heart of the Silicon Valley, the City of Sunnyvale is situated between the powerful regional centers of Stanford University/ City of Palo Alto to the north and the City of San Jose to the south, and is home to important technology companies such as Juniper Networks, Yahoo!!, Network Appliance, and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD). Regional access to the area includes US 101, Interstate 280, Highway 237, and Highway 82 (El Camino Real). Major arterials in the downtown are Mathilda Avenue and El Camino Real.



Aerial Map of Sunnyvale

Existing Conditions

Generally bounded by Mathilda Avenue on the west, Sunnyvale Avenue on the east, the Caltrain railroad tracks on the north, and El Camino Real on the south, the downtown and its immediate surrounds possess a variety of uses: a commuter train station; a civic center (containing a city hall, library, and police facility); single family and multi-family housing (including the Villa del Sol and Cherry Orchard projects); a mall (Town Center Mall) anchored by department stores (Macy's, Target, and JC Penney); office development (including the Mozart office project); a variety of local and national retail and dining uses; regional boulevards (Mathilda Avenue and El Camino Real); and a unique "main street" (Murphy Avenue). This wide range of activities and uses infuses the downtown with unusual variety and vitality, and creates the potential for what has been defined in the Urban Design Plan as a traditional, full service, mixed-use downtown.

Development Potential

Sunnyvale's important regional position creates opportunities for growth and development. As an indication of this potential, the city's population grew at the rate of about 1.2% per year in the 1990's, mirroring that of Santa Clara County over the same period. Growth and development in neighboring communities offer additional evidence of the area's development potential.



(Aerial rendering to be inserted)

Aerial view of the urban design plan

Recent Changes in the Downtown

Since the adoption of the 1993 Downtown Specific Plan, a number of changes have occurred in the downtown and its immediate surrounds. The City no longer proposes construction of a Performing Arts Center. Redevelopment of the historic Murphy Avenue area has occurred, including streetscape improvements and facade renovations. Currently under construction as of March 2002 are a 460,000 SF office complex (Mozart project) on Mathilda Avenue, a public plaza adjacent to the office complex, and a new 400-car parking structure with station improvements on the Caltrain site north of Evelyn Avenue. Recently completed are a new 124-unit housing project on Evelyn Avenue (Villa del Sol), and a new 300-unit housing project with limited retail and entertainment uses on the former cherry orchard site at Mathilda Avenue and El Camino Real (Cherry Orchard). A 287,000 sf expansion of the Town Center Mall has been approved, consisting of a new cinema, and new retail, restaurant, and other entertainment uses. Two new public parking structures that support the mall expansion have been approved, one structure recently completed and a second structure in design as of March, 2002. Finally, streetscape standards and gateways are in design as of March, 2002 for future implementation.

Market Forces

According to the Economics Market Review, current market forces differ from those active in 1993. Development opportunity is anticipated within the downtown for both the near-term and the long-term.

Near-term demand exists for residential use, especially “for rent” and/or “for sale” multi-family housing. There are signs that indicate an increased interest in downtown living, making

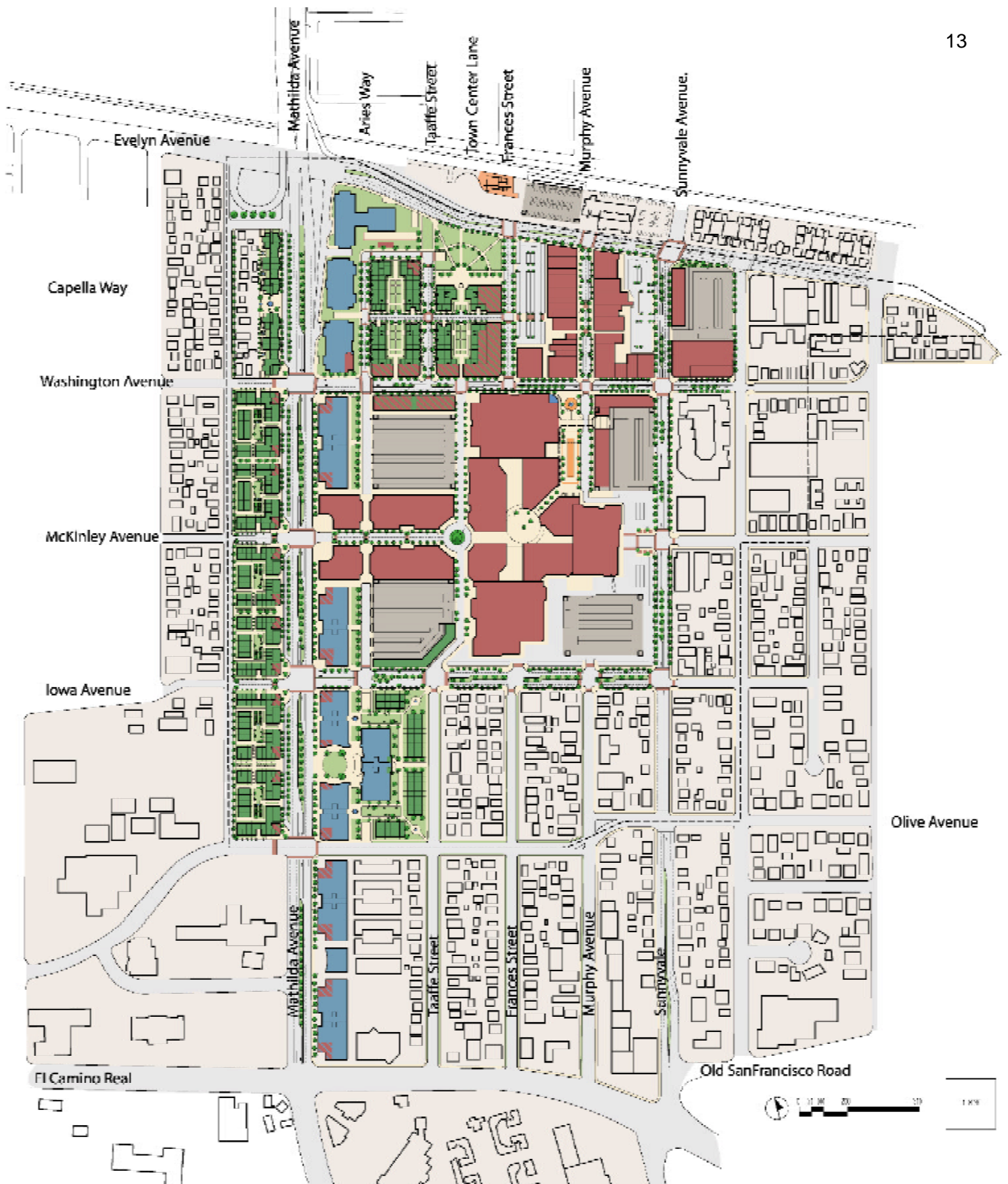
multi-family residential projects viable for the downtown. In addition, near-term demand exists for retail expansion, both in Town Center Mall and in retail “infill” north of Washington. The best retail categories for infill sites would strengthen the overall quality of existing retail uses and add a moderate amount of new apparel and home furnishings uses.

Long-term potential exists for office use. With the addition of the Mozart project on Mathilda Avenue and the recent slowing of growth in the technology industry, current demand for new office space is weak. Additional long-term potential also exists for a mid- to full-size supermarket, additional GFAO retail (general merchandise, apparel, furniture and furnishings), and Eating and Drinking retail. Hotel development, proposed for the downtown in the 1993 Downtown Specific Plan, is weak in the near-term but may be viable as part of a mixed-use project in the long-term.

Development phasing could follow a number of different scenarios over the next several years, but the plan contemplates the private market initiating three major undertakings. Redevelopment of Town Center Mall is anticipated to occur soon; development of additional office space on Mathilda is anticipated to occur within the next five to seven years; and construction of multi-family housing is anticipated to occur within the downtown throughout “full build-out” of the plan over the next ten years. As stated earlier, new development will proceed according to the strength of the market. This assumed time frame can be reevaluated and adjusted to reflect the real pace of development.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the Sunnyvale Urban Design Plan.





Urban Design Plan

Figure 2.1

The Vision for Downtown Sunnyvale

Development of the new plan started with a visioning process that attempted to capture Sunnyvale's unique character and potential. Six points embody this vision and the new plan's potential to help implement the vision, addressing the following:

Growth. The market will support residential and modest retail development today, and increased office development and a supermarket in the near future. The Urban Design Plan encourages a controlled, market-oriented growth within the downtown that is appropriate to its size, needs, and character.

Market Niche. Sunnyvale occupies a position in the market that lies between community and regional influence. The Urban Design Plan promotes Sunnyvale's market niche as a community-oriented downtown with a "sub-regional" market potential.

Downtown Uses. Sunnyvale's downtown can be a traditional, full service, mixed-use downtown. The Urban Design Plan encourages development of a wide variety of uses including office, regional and local retail, entertainment, restaurant, single-family residential, multi-family residential, and service retail uses.

Boundaries. Part of the creation of a viable downtown is the definition of clear boundaries. Although actual limits may be broader, the Urban Design Plan establishes Sunnyvale's downtown identity within boundaries formed by Mathilda Avenue, Sunnyvale Avenue, the Caltrain railroad tracks, and El Camino Real. The Urban Design Plan concentrates commercial uses north of Iowa Avenue and protects and preserves existing neighborhoods that surround the commercial core.

Connectivity. Sunnyvale's downtown street system contains discontinuities due to the scale and massing of Town Center Mall. Clear connections promote fluid movement and knit together different downtown components into an integrated whole. The Urban Design Plan proposes new connections through the mall following traditional rights-of-way to reinforce the street grid and improve circulation.

Street Character. Street character is an important component in the creation of a pleasant pedestrian experience. Murphy Avenue is an historic asset that possesses a charming, tree-lined, pedestrian-scaled character. The Urban Design Plan establishes a hierarchy of tree-lined boulevards, avenues, and streets to enhance pedestrian routes and create a pedestrian-friendly walking environment.

The vision can be encapsulated into a single statement, "An enhanced, traditional downtown serving the community with a variety of destinations in a pedestrian-friendly environment."





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